

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03832 01 OF 02 100829Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----070897 100832Z /20

O R 100730Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8626
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3832

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR MARR PINT LE IS
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON - THE VIEW FROM TEL AVIV

REF: TEL AVIV 8113

1. THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS DRAFTED BY MY POLITICAL OFFICER.
WHILE I WOULD NOT HAVE USED HIS LANGUAGE, I BELIEVE THE
BASIC POINT, THAT THE USG SHOULD NOT ACQUIESCE IN ISRAEL'S
SOUTH LEBANON POLICY, IS VALID.

2. SUMMARY: SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON HAS NOW EVOLVED TO
THE POINT WHERE USG MAY BE UNABLE TO AVOID CHOICE BETWEEN
GROTESQUE ISRAELI INTERPRETATION OF WHAT IS NEEDED TO PRO-
TECT ISRAELI SECURITY AND OFT-REPEATED U.S. COMMITMENT TO
THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

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3. REFTTEL ARGUES AGAINST U.S. EFFORT TO STOP ISRAELI
INTERFERENCE WITH UNIFIL AND GOL IN SOUTH LEBANON BECAUSE
"THE U.S. CANNOT FORCE THE ISRAELIS TO GO AGAINST
THEIR PERCEIVED INTERESTS" (PARA 5). THOSE INTERESTS
ARE PERCEIVED AS SUPPORTING THE CHRISTIAN REBELS IN THE
SOUTH IN THEIR DEFIANCE OF UNIFIL AND, IF IT IS PUT TO
THE TEST, DEFIANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON. ISRAELI

PERCEPTION IS OSTENSIBLY BASED ON UNIFIL INEFFECTIVENESS.

4. THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT IS BASED ON SEVERAL FACTUAL AND LOGICAL ERRORS: UNIFIL IS NOT INEFFECTIVE. PERCEPTION THAT ISRAELI SECURITY REQUIRES PRESENCE OF MARIONETTE FORCES ON THE ISRAELI NORTHERN BORDER IS ENTIRELY TOO SIMPLEMENTED FOR EVEN THE ISRAELIS TO TAKE SERIOUSLY. THE U.S. IS NOT COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S "PERCEIVED INTERESTS" AND DOES HAVE RATHER FORMIDABLE MEANS OF INFLUENCING THE ISRAELIS, IF IT HAS THE GUTS.

5. IT IS BEST TO START WITH THE FACTS. PALESTINIAN REINFILTRATION INTO UNIFIL AREA HAS BEEN DISTINCTLY LIMITED. UN REPORTS FROM THE FIELD ARE IN THE RANGE OF 150 TO 300. SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM FOR A NUMBER OF OBVIOUS REASONS HAS NOT UNTIL NOW TAKEN A TOTALLY HARD LINE AGAINST THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE BEHIND UNIFIL LINES. SOME OF THEM HAD NEVER LEFT THE AREA, EVEN UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION. UNIFIL FORCES ACHIEVED FULL STRENGTH ONLY SHORTLY BEFORE THE ISRAELI "WITHDRAWAL" ON JUNE 13. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY, WALDHEIM IS OPERATING ON THE PROPOSITION THAT HIS MISSION IS TO CONTROL ALL "ARMED ELEMENTS" IN SOUTH LEBANON AND HE MUST DEAL WITH THE BREAKAWAY CHRISTIAN ARMY FACTION AND THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA IN A DEMONSTRABLY EFFECTIVE FASHION IF HE IS TO SECURE PALESTINIAN POLITICAL COOPERATION.

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6. ISRAELI "PERCEPTION" THAT THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA IN THE SOUTH MUST BE MAINTAINED BECAUSE OF THEIR "COMMITMENT" AND/OR BECAUSE OF ISRAELI SECURITY NEEDS IS TANTAMOUNT TO SAYING THAT THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL DEPENDS ON CONTINUED CHAOS IN LEBANON. SUCH A PERCEPTION ONLY MAKES SENSE IN THE LONGER RUN IF THE ISRAELIS HAVE IN MIND THE BALKANIZATION OF LEBANON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOME KIND OF A PERMANENT "PROTECTORATE" IN THE SOUTH.

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3832

EXDIS

7. IT IS A TRUISM THAT "THE U.S. CANNOT FORCE THE ISRAELIS TO GO AGAINST THEIR PERCEIVED INTERESTS . . ." IT IS EQUALLY TRUE THAT THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL IS NOT IDENTICAL TO OR COEXTENSIVE WITH ALL THE PECULIARITIES OF ISRAELI INTERPRETATION OF ITS OWN SECURITY NEEDS. THE U.S. HAS CONTROL OF OTHER ISRAELI INTERESTS WHICH EVEN IN ISRAELI PERCEPTION OUTWEIGH ANY ISRAELI PERCEIVED INTEREST IN INSTITUTIONALIZED CHAOS IN SOUTH LEBANON.

8. A JOURNALIST ONCE ASKED PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIAN IF HE THOUGHT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD PRESSURE ISRAEL TO MAKE MORE CONCESSIONS TO THE ARABS. ASAD RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT THERE WAS NO NEED TO PRESSURE THE ISRAELIS, BUT THERE WAS INDEED A NEED TO STOP AMERICAN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI PRESSURE ON THE ARABS. THIS OUTLOOK APPLIES EQUALLY TO SOUTH LEBANON: IT IS TIME FOR THE UNITED STATES TO CEASE DEFEATING ITS OWN INTERESTS IN LEBANON THROUGH ITS DE FACTO MATERIAL SUPPORT OF ISRAELI INTERFERENCE WITH THOSE SAME INTERESTS.

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9. THE USG MUST FACE THE FACT THAT ISRAELI POLICY IN SOUTH LEBANON IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO FUNDAMENTAL LEGITIMATE NATIONAL INTERESTS OF LEBANON, WHICH WE SUPPORT, AND THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF ISRAEL ITSELF, BUT LEGITIMATELY CONCEIVED, WHICH WE ALSO SUPPORT.

10. THE PROPER U.S. DEMAND OF THE ISRAELIS IS NOT TO BE "HELPFUL", BUT TO STOP BEING HARMFUL. THE MILITIAS, HADDAD AND SHIDIAC COULD NOT CONTINUE THEIR DEFIANCE OF UNIFIL AND OF THE GOL FOR MORE THAN DAYS WITHOUT THEIR ISRAELI UMBILICAL CORD. IT IS TIME FOR A USG FINDING THAT

ISRAELI POLICY IN SOUTH LEBANON IS DIRECTLY CONTRARY TO UNSC RESOLUTIONS 425 AND 426, WHICH THE US SPONSORED, AND CONTRARY TO THE TERMS OF EXISTING US-ISRAELI MUTUAL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, AND TO DRAW THE NECESSARY PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES.

11. THE ABOVE WAS DRAFTED BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF MAJOR FIGHTING IN BEIRUT ON JULY 1 BETWEEN THE RIGHTIST MILITIAS AND SYRIAN TROOPS. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE PROMOTING RIGHTIST RESISTANCE TO LEGITIMATE SYRIAN ADF DEMANDS, MUCH OF THE REASONING ABOVE ALSO APPLIES IN THIS NEW CRISIS SITUATION. PARKER

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